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ABSTRACT

A 1980 needs assessment survey of women students at the University of California, Davis, was undertaken. The 327 women respondents (41 percent response rate) were undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students. In addition to collecting information about female respondents, including marital status, number of children, career plans, and employment, attention was directed to respondents' problems/needs, as well as the efficacy of university services, particularly the Women's Resources and Research Center (WRRC). While academic problems were the major ones, financial and health concerns were also important to the female students. Services female students viewed as important were: health care, financial aid, career and employment assistance, support for academic planning, school orientation, and entertainment/recreation/sports. While women's needs for university services were generally being met adequately, certain populations had unmet needs, including divorced and older women in the areas of financial aid and employment, and women with preschoolers in the areas of child care and health insurance. About 67 percent of respondents had heard of WRRC and 35 percent had attended WRRC programs or used the center. The needs assessment questionnaire is appended. (SW)

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NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY
OF WOMEN STUDENTS
AT UCD

JANUARY 1981

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Several people who met regularly to devise the survey questionnaire were:

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Marcia Browsers, UCD Graduate Student in Vegetable Crops, performed the initial analysis of the data and wrote the first draft.

Susan Holtzer Jones wrote the second draft and further refined the report.

Carol Whitlow, WRRRC Research Assistant, performed data analysis and wrote the third draft.

Bonnie MacKenzie and Marianne Rasor, Research and Evaluation, worked on the final draft.

Thank you all for seeing this project through to completion.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In spring 1980 a needs assessment survey of women students at UCD was undertaken by the Women's Resources and Research Center (WRRC). The survey, which had a 41% response rate, yielded 327 responses from women of all class levels: graduate, professional, and undergraduates. The purposes of the survey were to: 1) collect basic information about female students (e.g., marital status, number of children, career plans, employment), 2) assess problem areas and needs in the lives of women students, and 3) determine the efficacy of University services, particularly the WRRC, in meeting these needs.

Women's Problems. The major problems reported by women students were academic in nature, with financial and health concerns also important. Sexual harassment of female students was not reported as a problem for women students at UCD. Most women had a strong sense of their career plans. However, even among upper-division and masters students, about one in seven had little or no idea of what career they would pursue.

University Services. Services that were important to women were health care; financial aid; entertainment/recreation/sports; assistance with careers, employment, internships and academic plans; and orientation to the campus. One strong point was in the area of entertainment/recreation/sports facilities and programs. These services were rated as being both very important to women and as meeting women's needs quite well. Specialized services for women were rated as average in importance.

Women's needs for University services were generally being met adequately in all service areas examined. However, certain segments of the population contradicted this general trend. For instance, divorced and older women had unmet needs for financial aid and employment, and women with pre-school children said their child care and health insurance needs were poorly met. Also, about a third of women said their needs were poorly met in the area of career planning and orientation to the community, although specific subgroups with this complaint could not be identified. This was in spite of the fact that for women as a whole, average ratings showed that career planning and community orientation needs were adequately met in these areas.

WRRC. Approximately two-thirds of respondents had heard of WRRC and 35% had used the Center or attended one of its programs. Women who had attended WRRC programs rated them highly. A lack of publicity and inaccessible location were seen as a major weakness of the Center. Few respondents indicated a need for existing University services to be specifically woman-oriented; and most saw the ideal role of the WRRC as being in the areas of counseling and support.

The University of California at Davis (UCD) attracts women of high potential to train for professional participation in society. These women come to the University with high ideals for their future lives and careers, and their experiences at college--both in class and in non-academic settings--help to shape their feelings of power or powerlessness to succeed after college. During their years at UCD, women students may elect to use various University services designed to enhance their personal, educational, and pre-professional growth. One of these services is the Women's Resources and Research Center (WRRRC), a service founded in 1972 to serve the special needs of women students.

In order to ensure that WRRRC is identifying and responding to these women's needs, Student Affairs staff developed and implemented a women's needs assessment survey in spring 1980. The survey, which had a 41% response rate, was mailed to 800 randomly selected women undergraduate and graduate/professional students during spring 1980. Women were asked about their problems at UCD, their feelings about the importance and effectiveness of various University and WRRRC services, and some specific questions about the visibility and function of WRRRC. A copy of the survey questionnaire appears in Appendix A.

Demographics

Needs for University services are affected by any number of factors including personal characteristics (e.g., age and marital status) and the particular college milieu that a woman chooses (e.g., her living situation, friends, and field of study). The larger college environment itself also influences needs for services. For instance, a relaxed, noncompetitive campus in a rural setting would have far different emphases in student services than an urban commuter campus. Characteristics of Davis women include being among the best academically prepared college students in California; they are also predominantly young, White, and single. Table 1 shows that few UCD women live alone (8%), that few (11%) have children or are married (12%), that most (77%) live off campus, and that many are in highly technical or scientific fields (only 30% of women were in the Social Sciences or Humanities). About half the women responding to the survey worked. Two thirds of employed women worked on campus, and all employed women averaged 15 hours of work each week. Half the employed women held jobs that either influenced or bore some relationship to their career plans.

Survey respondents were generally comparable to the population of women students at UCD. Within this population, the mean age is 21, most (92%) are single, 83% are undergraduates, and only 5% have children.

Classroom and Careers

Choice of college major is one of the most influential and far-reaching decisions made by a college student. The decision can determine a student's friends while in college, the knowledge and skills to which she will be exposed, and the specificity and focus of her career preparation. Respondents were asked to rank the three most important considerations in their choice of major. "Personal Interest" was the strongest influence, cited by 94% of respondents and ranked first in importance by 79%. "Availability of Jobs" was second, cited by 62%; and "Concern for Community Needs" was third with 47%. Other considerations--talent, personal experience in the field, and high pay--

TABLE 1
CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

CHARACTERISTICS	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS (n=327)	CHARACTERISTICS	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS (n=327)
Age:		Marital Status:	
18	11.3	Single	85.3
19	21.4	(never married)	
20	12.2	Married	12.2
21	16.8	Divorced	2.1
22	9.8	Separated	0.3
23-25	12.2		
26-30	9.2	Number in Household:	
30+	7.0	1	7.8
		2	36.9
Class Standing:		3	20.3
Freshman	19.7	4	22.5
Sophomore	18.5	5	10.8
Junior	19.4	6+	1.6
Senior	24.0		
Graduate	7.4	Number of Adults in Household:	
(Masters')		1	7.6
Graduate	4.8	2	45.1
(Ph.D.)		3	19.1
Professional	6.2	4	20.8
		5+	7.3
Quarters at UCD:		Children in Household:	
1-3	34.8	Under six yrs. old	3.1
4-6	28.4	Over six yrs. old	8.2
7-9	14.9	No children	88.7
10-12	13.2		
13+	8.4	Living Quarters:	
		Apartment/Duplex	45.3
Ethnic Background:		House	23.9
White	78.2	On-campus Res. Hall	22.0
Asian-American	7.4	Off-campus Res. Hall	5.2
Hispanic	2.2	Solano/Orchard Park	0.9
Black	1.5	Trailer	0.6
Filipino	1.2	Other	2.1
American Indian	0.9		
International	3.7	Major Field:	
Other	2.5	Physical & Bio. Sci./Math	27.0
Decline to State	2.5	Ag./Environmental Sci.	18.4
		Social Sciences	18.1
		Undeclared	13.8
		Humanities	11.7
		Engineering	3.1
		Other	8.0

were also mentioned as factors in determining choice of career. Advice of parents, relatives, or academic advisers were not important influences on deciding on a major. Miscellaneous comments included those from two women who said they chose a major which would fit in with raising a family. One other respondent commented that a "desire to advance [would be] impossible unless one is male or has an advanced degree."

Virtually all (99%) respondents said they were planning a career, and even among freshman women, the majority felt they had a good sense of what careers they wanted: a large majority (82%) felt they had a "very good" or "pretty good" sense of future career plans or goals. The higher the class standing of the student, the better her sense of career goals (See Table 2).

About one-third (32%) of the respondents planned to enter a health-related career field. Business was the second most frequently mentioned career field (17%), followed by education (13%); various sciences including enology, agriculture, chemistry, food science and entomology (8%); government (6%) and law (4%). The remainder of the respondents mentioned other areas such as art, religion, communication, electronics, and architecture. About one in ten (12%) did not know what field they planned to enter after graduation.

In addition to general career fields, respondents were asked if they knew exactly what kind of a job they wanted after graduation. About a third (27%) did not know. However, 14% of women planned to work as doctors, nurses, midwives, pharmacologists or other health professionals, and 13% planned to be teachers or professors. Nine percent planned to work as veterinarians, and another 9% in business as managers or executives. Lower percentages of women planned to be attorneys (5%), and communications professionals such as journalists, researchers and computer programmers (4%). Jobs in the arts, technology, and the agricultural sciences (enology, entomology, and toxicology) were each favored by 3% of respondents.

The desire of UCD women to pursue careers after college is largely accomplished, according to another recent UCD survey. A 1980 survey of bachelor degree recipients showed that among women who received bachelors degrees in 1979, only 2% were primarily engaged in homemaking one year after graduation. Another 26% were primarily students, and 63% were primarily employed. However, among 1973 women graduates, who were seven years out of college at the time of the survey, 17% were primarily homemakers and 69% were primarily employed, indicating a movement out of graduate school and into the home and, to a lesser extent, into the career world by the older women graduates.

Problems

In order to pinpoint areas of unmet needs, women were given two different types of opportunities to specify problems they had faced at UCD. They were asked an open-ended question about any "difficult problem(s)" they had encountered and they were asked whether any of ten specific survey-listed items had been problems for them.

Academic problems, especially class-related, headed the self-reported list. Specific complaints included "too much competition in classes," "bad grades in spite of much studying," "uncaring professors" and "study habit problems." The percent of women mentioning various kinds of academic problems was: class-related problems (35%), declaring a major (10%), and academic advising (5%).

TABLE 2
ACADEMIC AND CAREER FACTORS

(In percent of respondents, unless otherwise noted)

REASONS FOR SELECTING A MAJOR	Most Important Reason	Second Most Important Reason	Third Most Important Reason
Personal Interest	78.6	12.5	2.4
Jobs Available	5.2	31.2	25.4
Community Needs	4.9	26.3	15.3
Parent Advice	0.6	6.1	16.2
Advisor Advice	0.9	3.1	6.7
Other	4.6	9.2	9.8

SENSE OF CAREER GOALS (In percent of each class level)		Very Good	Pretty Good	Little	No Plans
Freshman	(n=64)	16.9	53.8	27.7	---
Sophomore	(n=60)	25.0	53.3	18.3	1.7
Junior	(n=63)	28.6	54.0	17.5	---
Senior	(n=78)	35.9	46.2	14.1	3.8
Graduate: MA or MS	(n=24)	62.5	25.0	12.5	---
Ph.D.	(n=16)	75.0	25.0	---	---
Professional	(n=20)	55.0	45.0	---	---
All Respondents:	(n=327)	34.5	47.7	16.6	1.2

INTENDED CAREER FIELD

Health	32	Government	6
Business	17	Law	4
Education	13	Other	6
Science	8	Don't Know	11.9

INTENDED JOB

Health Related	14	Communication	4
Teacher	13	Arts	3
Veterinarian	9	Technology	3
Business	9	Agricultural Science	3
Attorney	5	Don't Know	27.2

Problems of day-to-day life--money and health--were also mentioned frequently, while other personal problems of various kinds were noted less often on the self-reported list. Money/financial aid problems were mentioned by 16% of respondents, physical/mental health by 15%, and problems with roommates and other personal relationships were mentioned by 5% of women respectively. Of all women responding to the survey, 76% listed at least one problem; among these, 61% had sought help from a University source.

The survey-generated list of problems gave women an opportunity to describe and rate difficulties of a largely non-academic nature. "Personal problems" headed this list, with 53% of the respondents saying this area was a problem for them. "Selecting a major" was second with 44%. Financial assistance (43%) was third, followed by "establishing relationships" (36%) (See Table 3).

Not all problems, of course, were equally serious. For instance, while 4% said selecting a major was a problem, it was more than "moderately difficult" to only one-third of them. On the other hand, child care, while it was a problem for few women, tended to be a very difficult one--60% of those who mentioned it rated it more than "moderately difficult." Likewise, housing, a problem for only 31% of the respondents, was a relatively difficult problem for 32% of them.

Problems also varied among different age groups. "Selecting a major" was the problem cited most by those under 22 (55%), while it was only eighth on the list for those above that age. "Establishing relationships" headed the list of problems for those over 30 (48%), while it was a problem for only 38% of the women under 23. On the other hand, "personal problems" were relatively consistent across age, as was "personal safety." Graduate students find child care and health care to be more of a problem than undergraduates. Sexual harassment is also somewhat more of a problem for graduates (10%) than for undergraduates (3%) (See Table 4).

University Services

Whether enrolled as undergraduates, graduate students, or professional students, women at UCD have a number of social, intellectual, financial and physical needs for which a variety of University programs and services are provided. Some services (such as health care and financial aid) exist to respond to needs of an immediate and practical nature. Others (such as intramural sports and personal counseling) contribute more broadly to the campus as a diverse and physically isolated, somewhat self-contained community.

In order to assess the importance of various types of services to women, respondents were asked to rate 31 types of University services on a scale from 1 (very important) to 5 (very unimportant) (See Table 5). Eleven services had mean ratings better than 3, and thus were considered of more than average importance to the respondents. These services, the ones most important to the greatest number of women, fall into four broad categories:

1. Individual Health Care. Health care for individuals had the highest mean importance rating (2.1) of any service on the list. Health Insurance, on the other hand, was rated as average in importance (3.0). Health Care for Dependents, a service designed for a small subgroup of students, was rated as quite low (4.0) by women students as a whole. Ratings given this service by women with children are discussed in a separate section below.

TABLE 3
PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY WOMEN STUDENTS AT UCD
--Survey Listed--

AREA OF CONCERN	PERCENT INDICATING IT A PROBLEM	LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY FOR THOSE STUDENTS INDICATING A PROBLEM			
		Percent Saying Problem More Than 'Moderately Difficult'		Mean Difficulty Rating*	
			Rank		Rank
Personal Problems	52.6	38.9	5	4.1	2
Selecting a Major	43.7	38.6	6	4.1	2
Financial Assistance	43.1	39.1	4	4.0	5
Establishing Relationships	36.4	41.7	2	4.0	5
Health Care	30.9	33.3	7	3.6	8
Housing	30.6	32.3	9	3.7	7
Finding a Job	30.0	39.3	3	4.1	2
Personal Safety	18.0	16.7	10	3.3	10
Sexual Harassment	4.6	33.3	7	3.5	9
Child Care	3.7	60.0	1	4.5	1

*On a scale of 1 to 7: 1=not difficult, 4=moderately difficult, 7=very difficult.

TABLE 4
 PROBLEMS¹ ENCOUNTERED BY WOMEN STUDENTS AT UCD
 --By Age and Class Level--²
 (In percent of each group)²

PROBLEM AREA	AGE			LEVEL	
	18-22 (n=234)	23-30 (n=70)	31+ (n=23)	Undergrad. (n=267)	Graduate (n=60)
Personal Problems	55	44	39	55	47
Selecting a Major	55	14	13	52	7
Financial Assistance	41	31	48	42	48
Establishing Relationships	38	24	48	38	30
Health Care	29	35	17	29	40
Housing	32	25	26	32	28
Finding a Job	30	33	4	30	28
Personal Safety	18	15	22	18	17
Sexual Harassment	3	8	9	3	10
Child Care	--	8	26	2	12

¹Survey listed problems.

²Percentages sum to more than 100 because multiple responses were allowed.

2. Recreation-Needs. Recreation Facilities, with a mean importance rating of 2.2, was the second highest rated service on the list. Also rated above average were: Fine Arts Performances/Lectures (2.5), Craft/Sports Instruction (2.6) and Intramurals/Informal Sports Program (2.8). Seen as somewhat less important were: SOAC Activities (3.3) and Ethnic Culture Activities (3.6). Ethnic/cultural activities received a slightly higher rating (3.0) from minority women (See Table 7). A related service, Orientation to the Community, was seen as about average in importance (3.1).

3. Money and Employment. Rated above average in importance were Student Employment, Career Planning and Financial Aid, with mean ratings of 2.4, and Internships with a mean of 2.5. Other services in this area were rated as less important: Community Volunteer Activities and Budget Counseling had means of 3.3 and 3.6, respectively.

4. Campus Matters. Academic Advising and orientation to Campus Services/Facilities were rated somewhat above average in importance with means of 2.4 and 2.8, respectively. More specific academic programs such as Academic Pressure Counseling (3.1) and Academic Tutorial Services (3.2) and Learning Skills Workshops (3.2) were all seen as being less important, although still slightly above average.

All of the counseling services were rated as average or slightly above average in importance. Peer Counseling, Personal Counseling and Sexual Counseling all received "average" ratings, while Marital/Family Counseling was seen to women students as a whole as "unimportant." Married women rated Marital/Family Counseling as only slightly more important than women as a whole, and indicated that their needs were well met.

In general, respondents felt that needs in important areas were being met reasonably well. In fact, needs were met fairly well in ALL service areas: the lowest Needs-Met rating for any area was only slightly below "average" (3.2). Generally, those service areas with comparatively worse ratings on the Needs-Met scale were also regarded as being of less importance to respondents (See Table 5).

Although women's needs for University services were generally well met, small subgroups indicated dissatisfaction in the areas of health insurance, health care, financial aid, and student employment. Married women, especially those with young children, had significantly more unmet needs for health insurance than single women (38% of married women indicated unmet needs in this area). Also, older women were significantly more likely than younger women to have unmet needs for individual health care. In the area of financial aid, freshmen and seniors indicated more unmet needs than other students: almost half the senior women said their financial aid needs were poorly met. Most divorced women (n=6) had unmet needs for financial aid and employment; married women (n=30) on the other hand, seemed to have the most financial security of any group; few of them indicated more need for financial aid.

Unlike the majority of services, five of the services listed in the questionnaire are meant to focus on the needs of small but important subgroups in the population. It was expected that the overall mean scores for these items would be relatively low. This was indeed the case. Special help for disabled people, health care for dependents, special help for foreign students

TABLE 5
ATTITUDES TOWARD UNIVERSITY SERVICES

SERVICE AREA	IMPORTANCE OF SERVICE		HOW WELL NEEDS ARE MET	
	Mean Importance Rating*	Percent Rating Importance as Above Average	Mean Rating*	Percent With Needs Poorly Met
Individual Health Care	2.1	68	2.6	20
Recreational Facilities	2.2	64	2.0	5
Career Planning	2.4	59	3.0	28
Student Employment	2.4	60	2.8	22
Financial Aid	2.4	60	2.9	31
Academic Planning/Advising	2.4	57	2.9	25
Internships	2.5	56	2.7	22
Fine Arts Performances/Lect.	2.5	54	2.5	10
Crafts/Sports Instruction	2.6	51	2.3	8
IH/Informal Sports	2.8	46	2.0	5
Orientation to Campus	2.8	43	2.8	23
Health Insurance	3.0	40	2.8	19
Orientation to Community	3.1	30	3.2	33
Academic Pressure Counseling	3.1	33	3.1	24
Peer Counseling	3.2	34	2.8	17
Academic Tutorial Services	3.2	34	2.8	21
Learning Skills Workshops	3.2	32	2.6	15
Special Assistance for Women	3.2	32	3.0	22
SOAC Activities	3.3	28	2.7	13
Community Volunteer Activities	3.3	21	2.8	14
Personal Counseling	3.3	30	2.9	20
Sexual Counseling/Info.	3.4	29	2.8	16
Ethnic Culture Activities	3.6	22	2.9	16
Budget Counseling	3.6	20	3.2	29

*Rating Categories

Importance: 1=very important
2=important 3=average importance
4=unimportant 5=very unimportant

Needs met: 1=very well 2=well 3=OK
4=somewhat poorly 5=very poorly

and minorities, and child care and marital/family counseling all received overall "unimportant" ratings from women as a whole.

In contrast, the ratings of the subgroups themselves (the women students who would benefit from the services) were higher. Table 6 shows that child care, for instance, was rated as "important" to women with children under six years old and of "average" importance to women with children six or older. Health care for dependents showed the same pattern. Women with children indicated that their needs for child care were being poorly met. Other specialized services were seen as average in importance to the students for whom they are designed, and needs for these services were usually being adequately met.

In a separate but related question, respondents were asked to list any services they would be more inclined to use if they were specifically woman-oriented. Of the 143 women answering this question (44% of the sample), 41% would prefer a woman-oriented Career Planning service, 33% mentioned individual health care, 26% would prefer woman-oriented personal counseling and 22% mentioned academic advising. (Table 7 shows the percent of all respondents who indicated a preference for a woman-oriented service.)

WRRC--Importance, Usage, Awareness

In addition to the previously mentioned questions about University services, the women were asked their opinions on WRRC services. Respondents were asked to rate the importance (to themselves only) of ten services being currently offered by WRRC. They were also asked to indicate which of the services they had used in the past, and then to rate the helpfulness of each of those services.

In all, 35% of the respondents had used at least one WRRC service: 14% had partaken of the Lecture Series, followed by Library/Research Information (13%), Referral Services (12%), Legislative Information (11%) and Evening Workshops (10%). All WRRC programs and services scored about "average" in importance (means of about 3). Referral Service was regarded as being the most important (2.7). Those who used WRRC services found seven of the ten services "very helpful" or "helpful," and all ten services were seen as having better than average helpfulness. Weekend conferences were found the most helpful by those who attended them.

Publicity. About two-thirds (63%) of the respondents had heard of WRRC prior to receiving the survey. Those over 22 years old were more likely to have heard of it; so were those who were employed. Higher class standing was also associated with knowledge of WRRC--among undergraduates, freshmen (38%) were least likely to be aware of WRRC, seniors (78%) most likely, and Ph.D. students (88%) were the most likely of all groups to know about the Center. Neither ethnic background nor major field were related to awareness of WRRC.

The California Aggie and billboard fliers were the most common sources of information about WRRC. About a third (32%) said that they had first heard of the Center through the Aggie, and 40% usually hear about the Center events through the paper. Billboards ranked second--25% first heard about WRRC from billboards, and 31% continue to receive most of their information in the same way. The Mr. Women's Center Contest and fellow students were also frequent sources of first introduction to the Center. Only 10% recalled first having heard of the Center through orientation and/or registration.

TABLE 6
ATTITUDES TOWARDS SPECIALIZED UNIVERSITY SERVICES

SPECIALIZED SERVICE AREA	GROUP SERVED	n	MEAN IMPORTANCE* TO SPECIALIZED GROUP	MEAN RATING:* HOW WELL NEEDS ARE MET
Child Care	Women with children	under 6 yrs	10	2.3
		6 or over	25	3.6
Health Care for Dependents	Women with children	under 6 yrs	10	2.0
		6 or over	25	3.1
Specialized Assistance				
Foreign Students	Foreign students	11	2.9	2.3
Minorities	Minority women	49	3.2	3.4
Ethnic/Cultural Activities	Minority women	51	3.0	2.5
Marital/Family Counseling	Married women	14	3.6	2.0
*Rating Categories				
Importance: 1=very important 2=important 3=average importance 4=unimportant 5=very unimportant			Needs met: 1=very well 2=well 3=OK 4=somewhat poorly 5=very poorly	

TABLE 7

PREFERENCES FOR WOMAN-ORIENTED SERVICES

SERVICE	PERCENT INDICATING THEY WOULD PREFER A WOMAN-ORIENTED SERVICE*	
	Percent of Total (n=327)	Percent of Those Responding (n=143)
Career Planning	17.7	40.6
Individual Health Care	14.4	32.9
Personal Counseling	11.3	25.9
Academic Advising	9.5	21.7
Recreation Facilities	5.8	13.3
Sex Counseling/Information	5.5	12.6
Peer Counseling	5.2	11.9
Internships	4.6	10.5
Financial Aid	4.3	9.8
Academic Pressure Counseling	3.7	9.1
Fine Arts Performances	3.7	8.4
Intramurals	2.8	6.3
Marital/Family Counseling	2.1	4.9
Crafts/Sports Instruction	1.8	4.2
Learning Skills	1.8	4.2

Others listed were less than 1% of total.

*Percentages sum to over 100% because multiple responses were permitted.

Attitudes Toward WRRC

Through open-ended questions, respondents were given the opportunity to list what they saw as the ideal function of WRRC, its major strengths and weaknesses, and additional comments and/or suggestions. Only a portion of the surveyed women responded to these questions; the discussion that follows is based on percentages of those responding to each item.

By far the largest portion of those responding (62%) felt WRRC's ideal function lay in the area of support and counseling. Referral services and general information service (34%) were next, followed by information about women's issues (20%).

To a question asking about the current strengths and weaknesses of the Center, over half the respondents (53%) felt programs were presently WRRC's major strength. Center staff was second on the list at 21%, with information availability at 19%. The Center's overall receptiveness was noted as a major strength by 11% of respondents.

Most respondents felt that WRRC's major weaknesses lay in the area of public relations. Lack of publicity was noted by 56% of those responding to this section of the survey, and "negative image" by 18%, with such comments as: "As with most feminist issues, the WRRC has an appearance of a subversive threatening radical group to those not familiar with feminist issues," or, "the emphasis of weak women trying to be stronger." Another 13% complained about the Center's location. A respondent commented that the Center doesn't have enough visibility "for the students who most need the help. Center is way out in the sticks for most people and they get lost."

Additional comments and suggestions from respondents in this section generally related to the weaknesses mentioned above. Thus, 39% suggested the need for more publicity, and 8% recommended a more central location. Another 9% said that while others needed the WRRC, they themselves did not, and 5% complained that the Center was too "pro-woman." Comments voiced concern over isolation of women from men, and concerns that the WRRC might be "militant feminists" or "full of lesbians."

Analysis and Discussion

Student Needs. Counseling and support, which was viewed by 62% of the 177 respondents as WRRC's ideal function, customarily refers to assistance with personal and/or social problems. WRRC no longer offers direct services in these areas; however, support would seem to be an indirect benefit of such current services as support groups, conferences and workshops and assertiveness training classes. The survey suggests a continuing need for counseling and support services among women students. "Personal problems" and "establishing relationships," for instance, both ranked high as problems for respondents, not only in numbers of women saying they were problems, but also in relative seriousness of the problem. In addition, among those who stated a preference for woman-oriented services, several different kinds of counseling were mentioned including personal, sex counseling, and peer and marital/family counseling. Comments about choice of career being limited or influenced by family-raising concerns, or about advancement being a male prerogative indicate the need for support from and interaction with other women who are professionally oriented.

On the other hand, most University counseling services were rated as only average in importance, and most respondents felt their needs in these areas were being met relatively well. Perhaps this response indicates that counseling services are seen as less appropriate for women's concerns than a Women's Center counseling/support program.

In the area of academic problems, survey data indicates significant, and possibly overlooked, needs for support and counseling. In particular, 35% of respondents volunteered class-related items as difficult problems they faced at UCD. In addition, 5% of respondents self-listed academic advising, and 10% named selecting a major as difficult problems. This response suggests that academic difficulties are the problems most often on the minds of women students.

Several forms of academic services were mentioned by those expressing a preference for woman-oriented services, including academic advising, internship programs, academic pressure and learning skills counseling. In addition, 18% of respondents in this section wanted woman-oriented career planning, which contains both academic and personal components.

There is evidence that, while University services are satisfactory for the majority of women students, there remains a minority with continued (but small) unmet needs. For instance, while 20% rated Budget Counseling above average in importance, only 15% rated available services above average. And while 33% rated Academic Pressure Counseling above average in importance, only 21% felt services in this area were above average. These figures suggest, at least, that small gaps continue to exist between available services and some individual needs.

WRRC: Problems and Prospects

While the WRRC service usage was relatively low, it received extremely high approval ratings from users themselves. This finding, combined with frequent references to publicity and public relations problems, suggests that communications might be a profitable focus for improvement of the WRRC services. Means by which women hear about the WRRC activities might also be expanded. Most respondents get such information from two major sources--the Aggie and flyers on campus billboards. Therefore, Center communications might be improved either by a) expanding into or increasing usage of other campus media, and/or b) improving usage of the two primary media. Either of these approaches would require additional research and/or analysis of campus media and their audiences. For instance, improved use of Aggie ads would require readership profiles to indicate which categories of students read specific portions of the paper, whether readership varies on different days, etc. Other campus media, especially various special-interest newsletters, and the campus radio station (KDVS) should also be explored.

While 63% of the sample had heard of WRRC prior to the survey, that figure included only 58% of undergraduates and only 38% of freshmen. In order to reach freshmen, WRRC may need to increase its exposure during orientation/registration. Because many freshmen are housed in the residence halls, these could be the sites for publicity and programs. Programs geared specifically to freshman interests would serve as an introduction to the Center. Programs for graduate students, on the other hand, must deal with their changing needs, new roles and increased responsibility.

Students find the Center's location out of their way, suggesting that a more accessible campus location would improve the Center's image and increase its usage. Many respondents commented that they were not familiar with the Center, yet they had a negative image of it based on preconceptions or past experiences with other Centers. Increasing women's interaction with the Center will help them base their images of the UCD WRRRC on actual experiences with its programs and resources.

Some respondents noted that, in seeking equality with men, they did not wish to use separate services. But it is possible that Center programs might foster communication with men. For example, the Center might provide a public forum for men and women to air their feelings about women's issues. The phrase "Women's Perspective/Men Welcomed" has been added to WRRRC program flyers.

On the basis of the results of this Needs Assessment Survey, the Center plans to make adjustments (mentioned above) to improve the services of the WRRRC. Staff at the Center are grateful to the students who responded to the survey, and they continue to welcome comments and advice from all members of the campus community.

APPENDIX A

1980 WOMEN'S NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

1-4

Directions: In each question, please circle the numbers that correspond to your answers, or fill in the blanks.

PLEASE DISREGARD THE SMALL NUMBERS THAT APPEAR THROUGHOUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE: WE WILL USE THEM TO CODE YOUR RESPONSES.

1. What is your current class standing? 5
1. Freshman 5. Graduate (M.A. or M.S. degree objective)
2. Sophomore 6. Graduate (Ph.D. degree objective)
3. Junior 7. Professional (Law, Medicine, or Veterinary Medicine)
4. Senior
2. If an undergraduate, are you a transfer student? 1. Yes 2. No 6
3. How many quarters have you attended UCD including this one? _____ quarters 7-8
4. Your age _____ 9-10
5. Are you a(n): 11
1. International Student 6. Hispanic
2. American Indian 7. White American/Caucasian
3. Asian American 8. Other
4. Black/Afro American 9. Decline to state
5. Filipino
6. Your marital status 12
1. Single (never married) 4. Separated
2. Married 5. Widowed
3. Divorced
7. Number of persons living in your household? _____ persons 13 _____ adults 14
- A. If you have children living with you, indicate the number of children in each age group.
1. Under 6 years old _____ 15 2. 6 years old and older _____ 16
8. Do you live in a(n): 17
1. Apartment house or duplex 5. Residence hall/off campus
2. Language house, sorority or co-op 6. Solano/Orchard Park
3. Trailer 7. House
4. Residence hall/on campus 8. Other
9. What is your major? _____ 18-19
10. Rank the three most important considerations which influenced your decision to major in a particular area:
1. Most important
2. Second most important
3. Third most important
- _____ A. Availability of jobs in the field 20
_____ B. Personal interest 21
_____ C. Concern for community needs 22
_____ D. Advice of parents/relatives 23
_____ E. Advice of academic advisor 24
_____ F. Other (Please specify) _____ 25
11. How many hours per week are you employed?
- A. On campus _____ hours/week 26-27 B. Off campus _____ hours/week 28-29 C. Am not employed 30

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12. How clearly defined are your career plans or goals? (Circle one) 31
 1. Very good sense of plans/goals 3. Little sense of plans/goals
 2. Pretty good sense of plans/goals 4. Have no intention of planning a career
13. Does your current employment relate to or influence your career plans? (Circle one) 32
 1. Definitely 2. Somewhat 3. Not at all
- 14a. After you are through with your education, in what general career field are you planning to work? (e.g., health, business, education, government)
 A. Field: _____ 33 B. Don't know what field _____ 34
- 14b. After you are through with your education, what specific kind of job do you plan to look for? (e.g., teacher, engineer, accountant, nurse, lawyer).
 A. Job: _____ 35 B. Don't know what job _____ 36
15. What difficult problem(s) have you had during your attendance at UCD? Explain briefly. For each problem, indicate which University service, if any, you used for help in solving your problem.
- Problem 1: _____ 37
 Did you seek help from a University service? (Circle one) 1. Yes 2. No 38
 If yes, University service used _____ 39-40

- Problem 2: _____ 41
 Did you seek help from a University service? (Circle one) 1. Yes 2. No 42
 If yes, University service used _____ 43-44

- Problem 3: _____ 45
 Did you seek help from a University service? (Circle one) 1. Yes 2. No 46
 If yes, University service used _____ 47-48
16. Please check which of the following have been problems for you during your attendance at UCD. Then rank the seriousness of any problems you checked on a scale from 1 to 7 as follows:
- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
|--|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|-------------------------------|
| <u>A problem, but not a difficult one</u> | | | | <u>Moderately difficult problem</u> | | | | <u>Very difficult problem</u> |
| <u>Area</u> | | | | <u>A problem? (circle one)</u> | | | | <u>Level of Seriousness</u> |
| 1. Selecting a major | | | | 1. Yes 2. No | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 49-50 |
| 2. Financial assistance | | | | 1. Yes 2. No | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 3. Housing | | | | 1. Yes 2. No | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 4. Establishing relationships | | | | 1. Yes 2. No | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 5. Finding a job | | | | 1. Yes 2. No | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 6. Sexual harassment (Placement of sexual conditions upon successful academic or employment opportunity) | | | | 1. Yes 2. No | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 7. Personal problems | | | | 1. Yes 2. No | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 8. Personal safety on campus | | | | 1. Yes 2. No | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 9. Child care | | | | 1. Yes 2. No | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 10. Health care | | | | 1. Yes 2. No | | | | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 c7-68 |

1 in 80

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17. How personally important to you is each of the following services? (Please do not consider how important the services are to others.)

1. Very important
2. Important
3. Average
4. Unimportant
5. Very unimportant

18. At the present time, how well are your needs being met by these University services?

1. Very well
2. Well
3. OK
4. Somewhat poorly
5. Very poorly

Service area	What is its importance to you					How well are your needs met				
Academic planning/advising	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Career Planning	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Internships	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Individual Health Care	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Health Care for Dependents	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Health Insurance	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Information and counseling on sexual matters	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Specialized Assistance:										
For Women	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
For Foreign Students	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
For Disabled Students	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
For Minorities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
For Veterans	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
For Child Care	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Recreation Facilities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Craft/sports instruction	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Intramurals or other informal sports programs	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Ethnic Culture Activities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Fine Arts Performances/Lectures	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Student Campus (SOAC) Activities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Community Volunteer Activities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Academic Tutorial Services	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Learning Skills Workshops	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Orientation to campus services and facilities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Orientation to community services and facilities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Academic pressure counseling	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Peer counseling	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Marital/family counseling	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Other personal counseling	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Financial aid (loans, grants, scholarships)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Student employment	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Budget counseling	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

19. Indicate which of the above services you would be more inclined to use if the service was specifically woman-oriented.

_____	_____	67-68
_____	_____	
_____	_____	
_____	_____	
_____	_____	
_____	_____	
_____	_____	77-78

2 in 80

20. How personally important to you is each of the following Women's Resources and Research Center programs or services? (Please do not consider how important it is to provide the service to others.)

1. Very important
2. Important
3. Average
4. Unimportant
5. Very unimportant

Importance Value
(Circle the response which most adequately indicates your own opinion)

Referral Service 1 2 3 4 5

to University and off-campus resources (e.g., health, legal, counseling, child care, career, personal)

Evening Workshops 1 2 3 4 5

(e.g. "Women and Power", "Men's Lives", Women's Public Speaking Workshop, "Our Bodies: A Weighty Issue")

Assertiveness Training Classes 1 2 3 4 5

Lecture Series 1 2 3 4 5

(e.g., "Women and Stress", "Women and Aging", Noon Lunch Gatherings, Dorm Dessert Lecture Series, Minority Women's Lecture Series)

Weekend Conferences 1 2 3 4 5

(e.g. "Women and Mental Health", "The Dual Career Couple Relationship")

Support Groups 1 2 3 4 5

(e.g. Women in Transition, International Women, Women in Agriculture)

Women's Newsletter 1 2 3 4 5

"Women's Writes"

Library/Research Information 1 2 3 4 5

on women-related issues

Legislative Information 1 2 3 4 5

on women-related issues

Volunteer Program 1 2 3 4 5

(work experience in staffing, publicity, programming)

21. Have you used each program or service?

Used
(Circle one)

1. Yes 2. No

1. Yes 2. No

1. Yes 2. No

1. Yes 2. No

1. Yes 2. No

1. Yes 2. No

1. Yes 2. No

1. Yes 2. No

1. Yes 2. No

1. Yes 2. No

22. If you have used any service(s) or participated in any program(s), how helpful was it/were they in meeting your needs?

1. Very helpful
2. Helpful
3. Average
4. Not helpful
5. Not at all helpful

Helpfulness
(Circle the response which most adequately indicates your own opinion)

1 2 3 4 5 5-1

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5 32-34

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23. Did you know of the existence of the Women's Resources and Research Center before now?

A. Yes

B. No

35

24. If yes, how did you hear about the Women's Resources and Research Center?
(Circle all that apply)

36

1. Cal Aggie
2. Campus special interest paper or newsletter
(e.g., Staff News, Campus Record, etc.)
3. Faculty member
4. Staff person
5. Fellow student
6. Fliers on campus billboards
7. KDVS
8. Mr. Women's Center Beauty Contest
9. Orientation/Registration
10. Self-initiated
11. WRRRC Newsletter ("Women's Writes")
12. Other
13. Don't know

48

25. If yes, how do you usually hear about WRRRC activities and events? (Circle all that apply)

49

1. Cal Aggie
2. Campus special interest paper or newsletter
(e.g., Staff News, Campus Record, etc.)
3. Faculty member
4. Staff person
5. Fellow student
6. Fliers on campus billboards
7. Orientation/Registration
8. "Women's Writes"
9. WRRRC staff person
10. Other

58

26. Overall, what do you see as the ideal function of the Women's Resources and Research Center?

27. On the basis of what you know of the Women's Resources and Research Center on campus, what do you see as its current strengths and/or weaknesses for you?

Strengths

Weaknesses

28. What suggestions or comments do you have about making the Women's Resources and Research Center more useful, accessible or interesting to you? Are there other programs or services you would like the WRRRC to provide? Please be as specific as possible:

3 in 80